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ABSTRACT

The results of the first year of a three-year longitudinal study of the adoption of a new Practical Action Curriculum by Ohio Vocational Home Economics teachers are reported. The purpose of the study was to investigate (1) the teachers' Stages of Concern about adopting the curriculum; (2) the factors that affected the teachers' degree of adoption of selected curriculum sections; (3) the relationship between the teachers' Stages of Concern and their degree of adoption of the selected sections. Teachers scored high on concerns at the Informational, Personal, and Consequence levels. They wanted more information about curriculum benefits, resource availability, and effects on students. Attendance at inservice sessions and participation in curriculum writing workshops were both related to the degree of curriculum adoption. The Stages of Concern level of the teachers was also significantly related; the higher the scores on the stages of Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing, the greater the degree of adoption. Administrators and supervisors planning to implement curriculum changes should involve teachers in the curriculum development process and provide a variety of inservice opportunities. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire can identify specific concerns to be addressed at the inservice sessions. (GJ)

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW CURRICULUM BY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

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This study reports the results of the first year of a three-year longitudinal study of the adoption of a new Practical Action Curriculum (PAC) by Ohio Vocational Home Economics teachers. The PAC modules were developed and pilot-tested during the 1982-1983 academic year and rewritten in their published form during the summer of 1983. Two sections of the PAC were made available to teachers at the August, 1983 conference (Introductory modules and Work and Family). The remaining five sections were presented at the 1984 Spring Regional Inservice meetings. Since the previous Ohio curriculum had been competency based, it was expected that teachers would have concerns about changes they would need to make in order to adopt the new practical reasoning curriculum approach.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following:

1. the teachers' Stage of Concern about adopting the PAC;
2. the factors that affected the teachers' degree of adoption of Introductory and Work and Family sections;
3. the relationship between the teachers' Stage of Concern and their degree of adoption of the PAC Introductory and Work and Family sections.

METHOD

Subjects for the study were 1,082 Vocational Home Economics teachers who attended the 1984 Spring Regional Inservice meetings sponsored by the Ohio Department of Education, Vocational Home Economics Section. Almost one-half of the teachers taught in city school districts and the other half in smaller local and exempted village school districts. Sixty-seven percent held a bachelor's degree, thirty-two percent a master's degree and one percent the doctorate. Forty-six percent had ten years or less teaching experience.

The home economics supervisors from the Ohio Department of Education administered a 53 item questionnaire at the beginning of their 1984 Spring Regional Inservice meetings. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first 35 items was the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SOCQ), (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979). The remaining items asked for information about educational level, experience, attendance at various inservice sessions, participation in the PAC curriculum development, use of the PAC Introductory section modules, and use of Work and Family section modules.

The SOCQ consists of 35 items which are marked (0) for irrelevant, (1) for not at all true of me now to (7) for very true of me now. There are seven subscales on the SOCQ ranging from Stage 0 (Awareness) to Stage 6 (Refocusing). Seven different Stage of Concern scores were computed for each teacher using the totals of the items on each of the subscales of the SOCQ. The Stage Level was then determined for each teacher by identifying the subscore with the highest value. If two subscores were of equal value the lower level stage was specified as the Stage Level.

RESULTS

Table 1 reports the number of teachers, the percentage of teachers and the mean, standard deviation, and range for each of the seven Stages of Concern. Inspection of the table shows that teachers are clustered at the Informational and Personal Stages. High scores on the Informational Stage indicate a general awareness of and interest in learning more about the Practical Action Curriculum (PAC). The teacher at this stage is not particularly worried about him/herself in relation to the curriculum. A high score at the Personal Stage indicates an individual is uncertain about the demands of PAC curriculum adoption and his/her adequacy to meet the demands and about his/her new role.

Table 1

Stage of Concern Scores

Stage	N of teachers	% of teachers	Mean	SD	Range
Awareness (0)	36	3.3	13.93	6.11	0-35
Informational (1)	429	39.6	25.99	6.41	0-35
Personal (2)	189	17.5	24.14	7.23	0-35
Management (3)	58	5.4	18.05	7.33	0-35
Consequence (4)	172	15.9	22.07	7.05	0-35
Collaboration (5)	41	3.8	17.69	7.04	0-35
Refocusing (6)	12	1.1	14.67	6.74	0-35
		N=937			

The relatively high mean score on the Consequence Stage indicates that the teacher's attention is focused on the impact of the PAC on students in the classroom. Teachers at this stage are also concerned about the relevance of the curriculum, evaluation of student outcomes and changes the teacher will need to make to increase student outcomes.

A Stage Level score was computed for each teacher. The mean Stage Level score was 2.007 with a standard deviation of 1.415. Forty-five percent of the teachers had a Stage Level score at the Informational Stage.

Table 2 shows the items on the SOCQ where over fifty percent of the teachers responsed with a six or seven indicating very true of me now or a

Table 2

Stage of Concern Questionnaire
Items with High Percentage of Extreme Scores

Item		% Responding 7-8 Very true of me now
15.	I would like to know what resources are available if we decide to adopt the Practical Action Curriculum.	70.4
35.	I would like to know how the Practical Action Curriculum is better than what we have now.	64.8
29.	I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area.	59.2
17.	I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change.	57.2
28.	I would like to have more information on time and energy commitments required by the Practical Action Curriculum.	55.0
33.	I would like to know how my role will change when I am using the Practical Action Curriculum.	50.6
26.	I would like to know what the use of the Practical Action Curriculum will require in the immediate future.	50.5
		% Responding 1-2 Not at all true
30.	At this time, I am not interested in learning about the Practical Action Curriculum.	64.4
	N=1082	

one or two for not at all true of me now. Teachers were generally aware of the PAC but expressed concerns about available resources. They also wanted to know how the PAC was better than the current curriculum, what other teachers were doing, and how their teaching would have to change. They wanted to know how the PAC would affect their role and about the time and energy commitments for adoption of the PAC.

Two items on the questionnaire addressed participation in PAC development. Table 3 shows the number and percent of teachers who participated in either the task force or the PAC curriculum writing workshop.

Table 3

Vocational Home Economics Teachers
Participation in Curriculum Development

Type of Curriculum Development	N Participating	% Participating
Task Force	96	9.0
Curriculum/Writing Workshop	41	3.8
	N=1082	

Table 4 reports the various inservice sessions on the PAC that a teacher could attend. The mean number attended was 4.026 with a standard deviation of 2.067.

Table 4

Vocational Home Economics Teachers
Attendance At Inservice Sessions

Inservice	Mean	SD	Range
Spring Regional Inservice	1.248	.937	0-2
August Conference PR Sessions	1.671	1.445	0-4
Local Inservice PR Sessions	1.118	.323	0-1
Total Inservice Sessions	4.026	2.067	0-7
	N=1082		

The teachers were asked to report the number of Introductory modules and the number of Work and Family modules they had used the previous year. Table 5 shows that fewer than twenty-five percent of the teachers had used any of the Introductory modules from the PAC. Nearly three quarters of the teachers had used none of the Work and Family modules.

Table 5

Vocational Home Economics Teachers
Use of Practical Action Curriculum Modules

Introductory Section	Used None		Used Entry Only		Used Both Entry and Advanced	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Practical Reasoning	800	74.6	203	18.9	62	5.8
Values	812	75.9	193	18.0	58	5.4
Management	922	87.6	96	9.1	31	2.9
Interpersonal/ Communicative	833	83.1	132	12.4	44	4.1
	Used None		Used 1-5 Modules		Used 6-37 Modules	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Work and Family	773	72.4	198	18.6	96	9.1

N=1082

The number and percentage of teachers estimating the various levels of use of the PAC is reported in Table 6. Fifty-nine percent consider themselves nonusers and thirty-four percent consider themselves novices.

Table 6

Vocational Home Economics Teachers
Curriculum Level of Use

Estimate of Use	N	%
Non User	624	59.3
Novice	358	34.0
Intermediate	60	5.7
Old Hand	5	.5
Past User	5	.5

N=1052

Pearson correlations were computed to determine the relationship between education, experience, curriculum development participation, attendance at inservice sessions and the teachers' use of the PAC. Educational level and years of teaching experience were not significantly related to any of the measures of PAC adoption. (See Table 7.) The highest correlations were found between curriculum writing and PAC module use, between August conference sessions attended and PAC module use and the self-estimate. Total inservice sessions on PAC did not produce correlations much different from August conference sessions only.

Table 7

Factors Affecting the Degree of Adoption of
Practical Action Curriculum
(Correlations)

Factor	Self Estimate	Number of Introductory Modules	Number of Work and Family Modules
Education	.0482	.0288	.0521
Experience	.0433	.0119	-.0256
Task Force	.0959**	.0798*	.0018
Wrote Curriculum	.0918**	.2337**	.2590**
Task Force and Curriculum Writing	.1510**	.1409**	.1162**
Spring Regional Conference	.1513**	.1774**	.1120**
August Conference PAC Inservice Sessions	.2454**	.2898**	.2590**
Total Inservice	.2596**	.2974**	.2343**

* p .01
** p .001

N=1082

Scores on the Stages of Concern and the Stage Level were correlated with self-estimate and with the number of Introductory modules used and the number of Work and Family modules used from the PAC. The teachers' score on the Awareness and Informational Stages are negatively related to all three measures of adoption. The lower the score the more likely the teacher to adopt the PAC. The teacher's score on the Consequence, Collaboration and Refocusing Stages is positively related to all three measures of adoption. The higher the scores the more likely the teacher to adopt the PAC. The Stage Level score correlates positively with all three measures of adoption. (See Table 8.)

Table 8

Relationship Between Teachers' Stage of Concern and Adoption (Correlations)

Stage	Self-Estimate	Number Introductory Modules	Number Work and Family Modules
Awareness (0)	-.3515**	-.3670**	-.2765**
Informational (1)	-.2408**	-.2827**	-.2195**
Personal (2)	-.1134**	-.1961**	-.1286**
Management (3)	-.0473	-.0660	-.0194
Consequence (4)	.2217**	.1761**	.1588**
Collaboration (5)	.2094**	.1620**	.1050**
Refocusing (6)	.2315**	.1687**	.1552**
Stage Level	.3417**	.3466**	.2527**

* p .01
** p .001
N=1082

DISCUSSION

The profile developed from teachers' scores on the Stage of Concern instrument is that of a typical nonuser of a new innovation. Ohio Vocational Home Economics teachers scored low on the Stage 0 (Awareness) level. This indicates that they were generally aware of the new Practical Action Curriculum and that they should consider adopting the practical reasoning approach advocated in the new curriculum guide. Teachers scored

high on concerns at the Stage 1 (Informational), Stage 2 (Personal) and Stage 4 (Consequence) levels. They wanted more information on why they should use the PAC, resource availability, and how roles would change. Teachers were concerned about the effect implementation of the PAC would have on their students. Low concern scores were found for the Stage 3 (Management), Stage 5 (Collaboration), and Stage 6 (Refocusing) levels. Teachers probably did not have sufficient information to know what needed to be managed. Since they tended not to be users at the time the data was collected the teachers were not ready to consider collaboration or refocusing their efforts.

Several factors appear to be related to the degree of adoption of the PAC by the teacher. The strongest predictor of the number of Introductory modules used was attendance at inservice sessions on the use of the PAC. The optional sessions at the August Conference were better predictors than were Spring Regional Inservice meetings. Participation in PAC writing workshops was also a significant predictor of Introductory module use. Both the PAC writing workshops and attendance at August Conference sessions predicted use of the Work and the Family modules. Inservice sessions, particularly at the August Conference, were related to the self-estimate of use. Years experience and amount of education were not related to PAC use.

The Stage of Concern Questionnaire Scores are related to adoption of the PAC. The lower the scores on Stage 0 (Awareness), Stage 1 (Informational), and Stage 2 (Personal) the higher the self-estimate of use and the greater the number of both the Introductory and the Work and the Family modules used. Stage 3 (Management) was not significantly related to adoption. The higher the Stage 4 (Consequence), Stage 5 (Collaboration), and Stage 6 (Refocusing) scores the greater the adoption of the PAC. The Stage Level of the teacher was significantly related to adoption of the PAC.

Although PAC use was related to Stage of Concern, inservice sessions attended and PAC writing workshop participation the majority of teachers (70%) had not used any of the PAC modules. If a teacher did use the modules, he/she was more likely to use the Work and Family modules than the Introductory modules. Since the Introductory modules were designed to precede the other modules teachers may have used some of the activities in the Work and Family section modules but may not have used the practical reasoning process. Modules used least were the Introductory Management modules and the most used Introductory modules were the Practical Reasoning Process and Values modules. Since these are somewhat similar in content to the traditional decision making and values clarification units already taught in many schools, the teachers probably felt more comfortable using these modules.

Administrators and supervisors planning to implement a change in type of curriculum can expect a higher degree of adoption if they involve teachers in the development of the new curriculum. The writing of curriculum modules is particularly helpful. Providing a variety of inservice opportunities is also beneficial. The Stage of Concern questionnaire can identify specific concerns to be addressed at the

inservice sessions. As the teachers Stage of Concern moves from Informational and Personal to the Consequence and Collaboration levels the teacher will be more likely to adopt the new curriculum.

REFERENCE

Hall, G. E., George A. A., & Rutherford, W. L. (1979). Measuring stages of concern about the innovation. Austin, TX: University of Texas, Austin.